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## Heart to Heart with Hardisty

 I want to thank all of you for your professional and timely shut-down and start-up activities and for working closely with our partners as we conducted these activities. We all have work that didn't get done during the shutdown and I know things have piled up. As you continue to sort through the phone calls and questions from producers, please know we are all here to support you. If you find yourself needing assistance don't hesitate to contact your supervisor or Leadership Team member. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to helping people help the land.



*Jane Hardisty*  
*State Conservationist*

 The current Farm Bill expired September 30, 2012. A Farm Bill conference committee has been named, and is moving forward toward establishing a new bill. Until a new Farm Bill is in place, authorities for mandatory programs continue. NRCS will be serving prior year contracts but no new contracts at this time. We expect to receive funding and guidance to offer new enrollments in these programs in the coming weeks. Authority for the easement programs has expired, including the Wetlands Reserve Program, Healthy Forest Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Program and Grassland Reserve Program. NRCS will continue to service prior year enrollments through closings, restoration and monitoring.

 Since our next issue of Hoosier Headlines will be distributed after Thanksgiving, I want to take the time to say THANKS. We all have so much to be thankful for and one of the things I'm most thankful for is the dedicated employees of Indiana NRCS. Your hard work makes so many things possible for so many landowners and I'm certain they, too, will be saying a heartfelt thanks during Thanksgiving. Enjoy the holidays!

*Jane E. Hardisty*

**\*\*\* Employee Spotlight \*\*\***

**Ryan Leazenby, Rensselaer Technical Team Engineering Technician**

**Q: As the one of the newest NRCS employees, please help us get to know you better.**

I was Born and raised in Mishawaka, IN. Go Caveman!! I have a boy that is 18 in November and a girl that is 14. I am having a really hard time with her growing up. All boys beware of daddy! I have been married now to my wife for a year and she brought four kids with her, three girls and a boy ranging from fourteen to five. Hello Brady bunch! Needless to say when I am not working I'm being a father and Husband.

**Q: Before coming NRCS you were in the military. What branch did you serve under, what was your position and how did it prepare you for your current position?**

I served with the United States Marine Corp from 1992 to 1996 right out of high school. My MOS was 0311 (infantryman or Grunt as we are affectionately called). My first unit was FAST Co (Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team) based out of Norfolk, VA. While there I was picked to shoot on the Marine Corp Security Force Battalion shooting team and won a silver medal. After my two year tour with Fast Co, I got orders to Camp Pendleton, CA and was selected to serve with 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine regiment. Due to my Marksmanship skills, I was soon picked up by a Scout Sniper Platoon. I was taught the Sniper art on the Job, meaning I was never School trained, so they called me a PIG. Later in 2005 I enlisted for a year in order to go to Iraq. In Iraq I toured the Al Anbar Province doing my thing.

**Q: In January, you will have your one year anniversary with Indiana NRCS. What has been your most enjoyable part of the job?**

I would have to say my fellow NRCS employees. They all have gone out of their way to make me feel welcome and provide me with the training to do my

job to the best of my ability. Without all of you I would not be as far along as I am now. Thank You!!!!

**Q: What has been the most challenging part of the job?**

Dealing with contractors. They can be very needy sometimes.

**Q: Do you have any professional or personal goals for 2014?**

Professionally I would like to become more proficient and knowledgeable about my job always striving to be the best I can. Personally I would like to get rooms built in the basement of the new home I bought in North Judson, IN

**Q: What do you do in your spare time when you're not working for NRCS?**

I spend most of my time running around to kid's school functions and raising them. When I'm not doing that I like to work on home improvement projects and spending time with my beautiful wife relaxing, which is not all that often due to kids, but I wouldn't trade my life for anything.



*Ryan Leazenby, Engineering Technician  
for the Rensselaer Technical Team*

## Hoosier Happenings

### KUDOS TO:

**Ken Collins, State Forester** and **Rick Neilson, Soil Scientist**, for their work to develop and provide a wetland delineation course that is based on the prior US Army Corps of Engineers Reg. IV course, but more streamlined and focused entirely on USDA needs through the National Food Security Act Manual.—**Shannon Zezula, State Resource Conservationist**

**Barry Fisher, State Soil Health Specialist**, for his continued promotion of soil health in Indiana and beyond. He was recently instrumental in working with Purdue to host the full-course soil health training. The event was held at Purdue's Diagnostic Training Center and was attended by Indiana NRCS, SWCD, ISDA, and Extension employees, and NRCS employees from Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, and Wisconsin, and a National Employee Development Center staff member. All in attendance were impressed with the soil health technical knowledge they gained, as well as Indiana's partnership commitment to soil health.—**Shannon Zezula, State Resource Conservationist**

**Becky Fletcher, State Public Affairs Officer**, for being an instrumental part in creating the National NRCS Soil Health Campaign. NRCS' "Unlock the Secrets in the Soil" education and awareness campaign recently won a 2013 Marketing Effectiveness Silver Award from the Summit International Awards program. Awards for this competition were given to only eight percent of the more than 800 entries, which were submitted by businesses and organizations from all over the world.—**Jill Reinhart, ATSC Special Projects**

**Alyson Keaton, Contracting Specialist, Donna Coleman, Budget Officer** and **Gail Voiles, Accounting Technician**, for getting the White Lick Creek EWP contract executed so quickly. "Congress may be a little dysfunctional right now but there are still a lot of excellent people like you that work hard to find solutions. Plainfield appreciates your extra efforts and we will put the dollars to good use."—**Tim Belcher, Plainfield Town Engineer**

### RON LAUSTER MEMORIAL RAIN GARDEN DEDICATED AT INDIANA STATE FAIR

During the Indiana State Fair in August, family, colleagues and friends of Ron Lauster gathered in front of the greenhouse on the north side of the fairgrounds by the Normandy Barn to participate in a dedication ceremony for the 'Ron Lauster Memorial Rain Garden.'

Ron served as the Director of the Marion County SWCD from 2005 until his death in April of 2011. Prior to that Ron worked for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, retiring from the agency as Indiana's State Resource Conservationist. Ron's career with NRCS spanned nearly four decades and took him to locations such as New Mexico and Washington, DC.

In his role as SWCD Director, Ron worked with many groups in Indianapolis and surrounding counties to promote a wide variety of conservation practices. In his work with the Hoosier Heartland Resource Conservation & Development Council, he helped design a number of demonstration rain gardens in prominent places in Indianapolis, including the one at the state fairgrounds. These rain gardens are visited by thousands of people each year and all include interpretive signage describing how simple steps by homeowners can improve water quality and reduce flooding right in their own backyard.

Ron will be remembered as a great conservationist and someone that could get things done in his community.



*Family, friends and passersby attend the Ron Lauster Rain Garden Memorial dedication ceremony during the 2013 Indiana State Fair.*

## Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

### **SPECIAL EMPHASIS AWARENESS: WORKING WITH HISPANIC LANDOWNERS**

Would you be prepared to offer assistance if a Hispanic landowner or producer walked into your office? The latest US Census Bureau population estimates “by race and ethnicity” show Indiana continues to become more diverse. The greatest concentration of Hispanic residents are found in northern Indiana. In Lake, Elkhart, Clinton and Cass counties, more than 13 percent of the population is Hispanic. Outreach involves understanding underserved customers’ needs and how best to communicate with them. Good planning will be key to providing services to Hispanics who call or walk through our doors seeking assistance.

There are many resources for employees to make sure our programs and services are accessible to all. A good number of documents like program fact sheets, frequently asked questions and news articles translated into Spanish can be found at the National NRCS website. Employee organizations like the National Organization of Professional Hispanic Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees have members that are always available to help translate our resources in Spanish ([www.nophnrcse.org/](http://www.nophnrcse.org/)) and also have access to a number of translated documents. Special Emphasis Program Managers on the Civil Rights Advisory Committee are another good resource that is available. The vast networking these managers do provides gives them opportunities to find the right tools in the right language. There is also The Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Handbook that is available for use by NRCS staff. This handbook provides tools to ensure that the assistance is given to persons that are not able to understand, speak, or read English. The LEP handbook can be found on the National NRCS website under [Civil Rights/ Program Compliance Branch/Limited English Proficiency](#). Keep in mind, information in this handbook is advisory in nature for NRCS staff and is not USDA policy.

As nontraditional farmer populations increase in Indiana, we need to be prepared to provide the best service possible. If you have questions about working with the Hispanic population, please contact [Lindsay Martinez](#), Hispanic Emphasis Manager.

### **Partnership Links**

**IN Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Bi-Weekly**

Updates: [www.iaswcd.org/whatsnew/index.html](http://www.iaswcd.org/whatsnew/index.html)

**IN Conservation Partnership:** [www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html](http://www.iaswcd.org/icp/index.html)

**IN Dept. of Environmental Management:** [www.in.gov/idem](http://www.in.gov/idem)

**IN Dept. of Natural Resources:** [www.in.gov/dnr](http://www.in.gov/dnr)

**IN State Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation:**

<http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/>

**Purdue University:** [www.purdue.edu](http://www.purdue.edu)

**USDA Farm Service Agency:** [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

### **GREATER INDIANA COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN—HOOSIER HEARTS GIVING HOPE**

Would you like to know what it feels like to help a child learn, assist a homeless family in finding a home, help find a cure for a disease, or to protect and endangered species? Then please take a minute to learn more about our 2013 Greater Indiana Combined Federal Campaign and “Hoosier Hearts...Giving Hope.”

For over 50 years the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) has been a resource for federal employees to make a charitable contribution in our community, across the nation, and throughout the world. The 2013 campaign period has already begun and runs through early January 2014.

The Campaign just isn’t about money. It’s about relationships – particularly the ones that you have with charities and the people that they serve. I encourage you to take a few moments to explore the 2013 Campaign Directory, which can be found online at [www.cfcindiana.org](http://www.cfcindiana.org). I feel confident that at least one of the more than 2,896 worthwhile charities will speak to you personally. During this tough economic time, it is especially important for those who are to give to lead by example and help those in need.

By supporting the CFC, you’re helping make change possible. It’s easy and the CFC makes it even easier by allowing you to give through payroll deduction. The CFC offers online pledging for those wishing to contribute through payroll deduction or by credit card.

Whether you give \$1 or \$2 a pay period or decide that you wish to do more, you make the choice that in your heart you know is best.

Thank You for taking the time to support the CFC. No gift is too small, and whatever you give, gives hope.

If you have any questions about the CFC, please feel free to contact Kathy Judd at [Kathy.judd@in.usda.gov](mailto:Kathy.judd@in.usda.gov) or 812-346-3411 x 116.



## Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

### NEW INDIANA NRCS COVER CROP BANNERS

Indiana NRCS has three new banner stands available for use during field days, meetings and other events. “Discover the Cover,” “Unlock Your Farm’s Potential,” and “Capture the Potential” were designed to be used together or separately to help educate the public about soil health. Both “Discover the Cover” and “Capture the Potential” are specific to cover crops while “Unlock Your Farm’s Potential” is a general soil health banner. If you would like to reserve any of these banner stands, please check for availability by contacting Kris Vance at: [kris.vance@in.usda.gov](mailto:kris.vance@in.usda.gov).



### LDP PROJECT BRINGS NEW LIGHT TO DRAINAGE WATER MANAGEMENT PRACTICE



*Eads & Son Contractors preparing to install one of the laterals of the new drainage system.*



*An Agri-Drain In-line Water Control structure recently installed for the Drainage Water Management Project*

Andrew Pursifull, Agricultural Engineer for the Rensselaer Technical Team, recently participated in the Leadership Development Program (LDP) where he had to complete a project that would “better the agency”. He chose to focus his efforts on Drainage Water Management (DWM) to show the impacts this practice can have on cover crops and soil health. With assistance from Joe Updike, Wabash County District Conservationist, Andrew helped the Wabash County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) develop and install a DWM demonstration plot on the Wabash County Farm.

The Wabash County Farm is a small farm owned and operated by the SWCD that is currently being used as a training and demonstration site for various conservation practices and activities. Most recently, the farm was named one of the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative’s (CCSI) Hubs. CCSI is a partnership effort to improve soil and water quality through conservation cropping systems focusing on continuous no-till/strip-till, cover crops, precision farming, and nutrient and pest management. Because Drainage Water Management is included as a practice that can be used for nutrient management, installing a functional representation of DWM is crucial to promoting the practice among local farmers.

Due to SWCD financial constraints, Andrew had to get creative in obtaining funding for this project. With help from several local companies, Andrew was able to secure a structure, water gate, tile and installation of the DWM at no cost to the District. The project was installed and completed September 30th and will be utilized during many Wabash County conservation events.

To learn more about becoming involved in the Leadership Development Program, please contact Jill Reinhart at: [jill.reinhart@in.usda.gov](mailto:jill.reinhart@in.usda.gov) or Becky Ross at: [becky.ross@in.usda.gov](mailto:becky.ross@in.usda.gov).

## Hoosier Happenings (cont.)

### **SOUTHWEST INDIANA HOLDS 2013 SOIL EXPO**

*Submitted by Mark Cambron, Vanderburgh County District Conservationist*

Several Conservation groups from Southwest Indiana recently combined efforts in order to present “Soil Health Expo 2013”. The expo was held at the Vanderburgh County 4-H Center in Evansville, Indiana. The event was an overall success with nearly 150 farmers, landowners, and conservation professionals in attendance to learn the latest scientific recommendations in controlling herbicide resistant weeds and improving soil health through the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI).

Tom Bechman, editor of the Indiana Prairie Farmer, facilitated the event. Mr. Bechman’s knowledge of farming in Indiana was of great benefit as he introduced speakers and interacted with the audience and farmer panel during the expo.

“Herbicide Resistant Weeds” were the first topic of the morning. Dr. Aaron Hager, associate professor of weed science of the University of Illinois, presented a very timely program focusing on the biology and management of weed species that are becoming increasingly common and problematic in Illinois and Indiana.

Larry Huffmeyer, CCSI Farmer and Syngenta Representative (retired), presented a program and lead discussion on residual effects of herbicides on establishment of cover crops, proper chemical selection and nozzling for weed control. Larry’s common-sense, easy-to-understand methods to effectively scout and control weeds in a conservation cropping system were of great interest to attendees.

Following an excellent catered lunch from the Hornville Tavern, Hans Kok, CCSI Representative, expanded more on the many benefits of Conservation Cropping System that utilizes diversified cover crops, pest and nutrient management, and no-till.

Kurt Stahl, CCSI Farmer discussed his challenges and successes while in the process of developing a conservation cropping system that builds soil health and profitability.

John Neufelder, Purdue University Extension Agent, discussed the new commercial and organic fertilizer management requirements recently released by the Indiana State Chemist.

The farmer panel consisted of Mark Anson (Knox County Farmer), Phil Carter (Gibson County Farmer), Ray McCormick (Knox County Farmer), Marty Finney (Daylight Farm Supply). Each participant discussed their challenges and success with the different ways in establishment of cover crop seed – aerial application, drilling, and broadcasting.



*Attendees listen as Dr. Aaron Hager, Associate Professor of Weed Science at the University of Illinois discusses problematic weed species*

*Lisa Holscher, CCPI Coordinator, introduces the farmer panel at the 2013 Southwest Soil Expo*



*Dr. Aaron Hager, Associate Professor of Weed Science at the University of Illinois discusses problematic weed species.*

## PERSONNEL UPDATE

### SELECTIONS FROM VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cassandra Vondran selected for the District Conservationist position at the Huntington Field Office effective 10-17-13  
Jason McKittrick selected for the Area Engineer position at the SE Area Office in North Vernon effective 10-20-13

### REASSIGNMENT

Tyler Martindale, Area Engineer, transferred to NRCS in Bozeman, MT effective 10-20-13

### RESIGNATION

Sandy Buening, Ag Engineer, at the Salem CIT Office effective 10-25-13

## "Unlock the Secrets in the Soil" Wins International Award



NRCS' ["Unlock the Secrets in the Soil"](#) education and awareness campaign recently won a 2013 Marketing Effectiveness Silver Award from the Summit International Awards program. Awards for this competition were given to only 8 percent of the more than 800 entries, which were submitted from all over the world.

Nearly all of the "Unlock the Secrets" campaign's creative products were developed in-house by a team of NRCS state and national public affairs and graphics professionals. "It's rewarding to see NRCS' team of communicators recognized for their efforts supporting this critically important conservation endeavor," said soil health campaign coordinator Ron Nichols.

The Summit MEA competition awards marketing communications that successfully influence an audience's knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. "Thanks to the soil efforts of everyone throughout the agency and within the conservation partnership, we're no doubt making a difference on the land," Nichols said. "And the good news is we've only just begun."

## Mark Your Calendar

### NOVEMBER

- 5: Northeast Area Meeting
- 6: Leadership Annual Business Meeting
- 8: SWCS Workshop
- 11: Veteran's Day—Office closed
- 12: Advanced Cover Crop  
Veteran's Appreciation Luncheon  
SAC/FAC Meeting
- 13: Southeast Area Meeting
- 19: Area Conservationist Meeting
- 20: Leadership Team Meeting
- 27: Southwest Area Meeting
- 28: Thanksgiving—Office closed

### DECEMBER

- 3: Northeast Area Meeting
- 5: Civil Rights Committee
- 10: SAC/FAC Meeting
- 11: Southeast Area Meeting  
Northwest Area Meeting
- 12: Southwest Area Meeting
- 17: Area Conservationist Meeting  
ICP Leaders Meeting
- 18: Leadership Team Meeting
- 25: Christmas—Office closed



You can find up-to-date information about upcoming events on the Indiana SharePoint site at:  
<https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/central/in/Lists/Calendar/calendar.aspx>